

LAFCO of Napa County

Local Agency Formation Commission

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MEMORANDUM

June 12, 2003

TO: Local Agency Formation Commission

FROM: Keene Simonds, Analyst

SUBJECT: Comprehensive Water Service Study – Supplemental Report
Private Water Service Providers

At the April 10, 2003 meeting, the Commission asked staff to expand the scope of its *Comprehensive Water Service Study* to provide an overview of private water service in Napa County. Specifically, the Commission expressed interest in identifying the extent of private water service in the County as well as documenting service conditions relevant to LAFCO's review of public service providers. Although private water service providers are outside LAFCO's jurisdiction, they serve important roles in the development of current and future land use patterns within their respective service areas – most typically in unincorporated residential communities.

Oversight of private water service providers is generally confined to state and local health and safety regulatory agencies; investor owned and private for-profit water companies are also regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission. Pursuant to California Health and Safety Code, primary regulation of all public water systems is delegated to the Department of Health Services (DHS). Health and Safety Code §116275 defines a public water system as serving 15 or more service connections and/or regularly serving at least 25 individuals at least 60 days a year. Among its regulatory duties, DHS is responsible for administering and enforcing domestic water quality standards established under California's Safe Drinking Water Act. This Act requires that all operators of public water systems receive a domestic water supply permit from DHS prior to initiating service. As part of the permit process, each applicant is required to submit a technical report containing a description of its supply and distribution system, service area, and system demands. Once permitted, operators of public water systems must provide DHS with regular coliform sampling results in addition to semi-annual inorganic chemical monitoring assessments (i.e., arsenic). Operators are also required to provide DHS with a certified copy of their annual "consumer confidence report." Under a local primacy delegation agreement with DHS, the Napa County Department of Environmental Management is assigned jurisdiction of local public water systems serving fewer than 200 service connections; public water systems with 200 or more service connections are regulated by DHS' regional office in Santa Rosa.

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A review of DHS and Napa County Department of Environmental Management's indices revealed approximately 180 public water systems in Napa County. The vast majority of these public water systems are classified as "transient-noncommunity" and "nontransient-noncommunity" typically serving schools, wineries, and restaurants. Water supplies for these systems are generally drawn from local groundwater sources. The remaining public water systems in the County are primarily classified as "community water systems." Community water systems serve at least 15 service connections used by permanent residents and/or regularly serve at least 25 permanent residents. These systems typically serve residential communities, ranging from municipalities and special districts to homeowner associations and mobile home parks. Water supplies for these systems are generally drawn from groundwater and surface sources.

Noting that the main objective of this endeavor is the identification of organized private water service providers serving residential customers, staff has identified 12 public water systems operated by private and mutual water companies in Napa County. Aggregately, these companies provide the majority of private residential water service in the County. Of the 12 identified, only one company (Meyers Water Co.) is regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission. The remaining 11 private water service companies are required only to comply with water quality standards established by DHS or the County's Department of Environmental Management – water rates and service areas are determined by the provider.

An overview of the 12 private and mutual water companies providing potable water service in Napa County is as follows:

1. Cannon Park Water Company

Provides potable water service to approximately eight residential connections located in the vicinity of Cannon Park Drive's intersection with Deer Park Road, east of St. Helena. The distribution system is served by a local well.

2. Howell Mountain Mutual Water Company

Provides potable water service to approximately 386 residential connections located throughout the communities of Angwin and Deer Park, east of St. Helena. The distribution system is served by the "Friesen Lakes," a network of nine man-made reservoirs located in the Conn Creek Watershed.

3. La Tierra Heights Mutual Water Company

Provides potable water service to approximately 19 residential connections in the "La Tierra Subdivision" located in the vicinity of Sunset Drive and La Tierra Drive's intersection with Howell Mountain Road, east of St. Helena. The distribution system is served by a local well.

4. Linda Falls Terrace Mutual Water Company

Provides potable water service to approximately 14 residential connections in the "Linda Falls Terrance Subdivision" located in the vicinity of Linda Falls Terrance Drive's intersection with Howell Mountain Road, east of St. Helena. The distribution system is served by two local wells.

5. Linda Vista Mutual Water Company

Provides potable water service to approximately 30 residential connections located in the vicinity of Crestmont Drive's intersection with Deer Park Road, east of St. Helena. The distribution system is served by two local wells.

6. Mapes Heights Mutual Water Company

Provides potable water service to approximately 8 residential connections located along Kortum Canyon Road, west of Calistoga. The system is served by a local well.

7. Meyers Water Company

Provides potable water service to approximately 92 residential connections in the "Edgerly Island Subdivision" located along Milton Road, south of Napa. The service area includes the southern portion of the Napa River Reclamation District No. 2109. The distribution system is served by a local well.

8. Milton Road Water Company

Provides potable water service to approximately 24 residential connections located along Milton Road, south of Napa. The service area includes the northern portion of the Napa River Reclamation District No. 2109. The distribution system is served by a local well.

9. Rutherford Hill Mutual Water Company

Provides potable water service to approximately four residential connections and the Auberge Du Soleil Resort and Restaurant located in the vicinity of Rutherford Hill Road's intersection with Silverado Trail, south of St. Helena. The distribution system is served by two local wells.

10. Tucker Acres Mutual Water Company

Provides potable water service to approximately 39 residential connections located in the vicinity of Tucker Road's intersection with State Highway 29, south of Calistoga. The distribution system is served by a local well.

11. Vailima Estates Mutual Water Company

Provides potable water service to approximately 14 residential connections located in the vicinity of Bournemouth Road's intersection with Silverado Trail, north of St. Helena. The distribution system is served by two local wells.

12. Woodland Ridge Mutual Water Company

Provides potable water service to approximately nine residential connections located along Howell Mountain Road, east of St. Helena. The distribution system is served by two local wells.

Additionally, St. Helena Hospital provides potable water service to approximately 178 residential connections in addition to serving its 188-bed hospital. Its service area extends along the Sanitarium Road area, east of St. Helena. The distribution system is served by five local wells.

Please note that during the course of this review, mailed notices were sent to the service providers listed above. These notices, coupled with telephone calls (when possible), explaining the scope of LAFCO's *Comprehensive Water Service Study* asked for their assistance in providing staff with an overview of service conditions within their respective service areas. Of those replying, a common concern expressed by several private water service providers serving the Angwin/Deer Park area involves the threat of overdraft within the local groundwater basins due to the influx of vineyards in the area. Many of these service providers expressed apprehension as to the overall result the increased agricultural production will have on existing residential water tables (see attachment). In addition, many of the smaller water companies noted the adverse impact increased water quality standards imposed by state and local health officials have created on their financial capacity.

Ultimately, the review of private water service is limited to public records and information voluntarily provided by the affected entity. Efforts to contact representatives from each of the private and mutual water companies serving residents of Napa County indicates a general lack of interest on the part of the provider to disclose service information. An underlying issue might involve the relationship many of these private water suppliers have with homeowner associations; disclosures of water service conditions perceived as problematic may adversely affect property values and deter these providers from disclosing information to the public.